European Exploration (Renaissance) — Short Summary

1. Why Europeans Started Exploring

- In 1453, the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople, blocking Europe's trade routes to Asia.

- Asian goods became expensive, so Europeans searched for new sea routes.

- Kingdoms wanted more power, new territories, and to spread Christianity.

Motivations:

- Economic: Find gold, silver, luxury goods; discover new trade routes.

- Political: Expand territory, increase power.

- Religious: Convert people in new lands to Christianity.

2. Advances in Navigation

- Better knowledge of stars and planets improved navigation.

- New tools: Compass, Astrolabe, Portolan charts, Chip log.

- The caravel was a fast, strong ship designed for long voyages.

3. Major Explorers

- Christopher Columbus (Spain, 1492): Reached the Caribbean; led to the discovery of the Americas by Europeans.

- John Cabot (England, 1497): Reached Newfoundland.

- Vasco da Gama (Portugal, 1497–99): First European to reach India by sailing around Africa.

- Pedro Álvares Cabral (Portugal, 1500): Reached Brazil.

- Ferdinand Magellan (Spain, 1519–22): Led the first circumnavigation of the Earth.

- Jacques Cartier (France, 1534): Explored the St. Lawrence River area.